

**TESTIMONY OF ATTORNEY ERIC R. BROWN
CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF POLICE UNIONS
AFSCME, COUNCIL 15
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE OF
THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

FEBRUARY 8, 2011

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee, I represent AFSCME Council 15, a labor union representing the interests of more than 4000 police officers in 62 municipal communities throughout Connecticut.

We are opposed to the passage of HB 5056 – An Act Raising the Educational Requirements for State and Municipal Police Officers.

The bill proposes that police officers “Not later than five years after becoming a sworn member of the Division of State Police within the Department of Public Safety, such sworn member shall obtain an associate's degree.”

The bill would present a hardship to those officers already employed who have not obtained a degree. Presumably, the language would result in decertification of those officers who, after five years of employment currently do not have a degree.

While it makes sense for police officers to have an education, employing agencies must cooperate in ensuring that officers can obtain higher education degrees. However, with varying schedules and odd working hours, it can be very demanding and difficult for police officers to juggle work schedules, family life, and educational demands in order to obtain a degree. Further, given that the benefit of the education will run to the employing agency, the employing agency should be responsible for paying for obtaining the degree.

With credits costing as much as \$400, an associates degree could cost a police officer nearly \$25,000 plus associated expenses.

While we acknowledge that it is a good idea to have educated police officers, the demands posed by this legislation are too great for us to be supportive of the measure.